

West Lafayette News

CITY OF WEST LAFAYETTE

www.city.west-lafayette.in.us

West Lafayette is protecting our natural resources

By Mayor Jan H. Mills

Clean water is an essential component of livability for cities and towns and their citizens. Over the past several decades, numerous federal laws designed to protect our environment and provide us with clean water have been implemented.

Through the Clean Water Act, the federal government has mandated that municipalities meet certain standards for operating wastewater treatment plants. All treatment plants must have an NPDES (National Pollutant Discharge Elimination System) permit for operation. This 5-year permit is issued in Indiana through the Indiana Department of Environmental Management.

Part of the NPDES permit requires West Lafayette to have a long-term combined sewer overflow, or CSO, plan. CSOs are remnants of early – and now outdated – infrastructure in which the same pipe collected both storm water runoff and sanitary sewage and ran directly to the wastewater treatment plant. More than 100 cities and towns in Indiana have CSOs. Potential public health problems arise when rainfall overloads the combined sewer system, resulting in a discharge of excess

wastewater directly into the Wabash River. West Lafayette currently has 3 locations where CSOs can occur.

Separating storm and sanitary sewers is a very expensive proposition. In 1993, the city be-



Mayor Jan Mills

Proposed Rate Schedule

- 15%, July 1, '04, \$4.69/1,000 gal.
- 15%, July 1, '05, \$5.40/1,000 gal.
- 15%, July 1, '06, \$6.06/1,000 gall.

For an average residential customer (5,000 gal./month), the monthly wastewater bill would increase from \$20.35 to \$23.45 in 2004, to \$27 in 2005 and to \$30.30 in 2006.

gan an aggressive 9-part program to sharply reduce CSOs and comply with federal regulations. West Lafayette's implementation of a 20-year CSO control plan continues to place us well ahead of the curve in meeting Clean Water Act regulations.

To finance the improvements to the wastewater treatment utility, the city made use of the low-interest State Revolving Loan Fund and, in 1996, amended our long-term plan to meet new federal CSO control guidelines. The next 6 years brought a number of major accomplishments:

- An \$18 million upgrade to our

wastewater treatment plant that included ammonia removal and de-chlorination (1997)

- Completion of the \$2.2 million foundation drain disconnect program in BarBarry Heights (1999)
- The \$2.3 million North River Road lift station (1999)
- Construction of the \$4.4 million River Road interceptor (2001)
- The \$1.9 million rehabilitation of the Happy Hollow interceptor (2001)

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Heads Up!

- You can start receiving **combined sewer overflow notifications** by e-mailing csoinfo@city.west-lafayette.in.us, or calling the Wastewater Treatment Utility at 775-5145.
- The Street, Sanitation and Recycling Department recently issued its color-coded **spring/summer pickup schedule**. If you did not receive one, please call 775-5242.
- If you have not already enjoyed the city's new **trails network**, be sure to check it out soon. To get a trails map, visit the city's Web site or call the Parks and Recreation Department at 775-5110.
- Riverside Skating Center's **spring inline and roller skating season** has begun. Call 743-7465 for all the exciting details.

- Construction of the wet weather treatment facility (\$5.9 million) to significantly reduce CSO impacts on the Wabash River (2003)

We are now poised to move forward on the final components of our 20-year plan – renovation of the wastewater plant digester and construction of a western sewer interceptor.

Coordinating the western interceptor with the construction of U.S. 231 will reduce construction-related disruptions in the area, as well as costs.

A \$10-\$12 million investment, the western interceptor will result in the removal of 2 or 3 of our lift stations, which require regular maintenance; maximize our treatment of wet weather flow; and re-

duce the volume of sanitary flow entering the combined sewers.

On April 7, 2004, the city council passed a wastewater rate-increase ordinance on first reading. That increase will allow us to meet the financial demands for operation and maintenance of the plant, satisfy the costs of new construction and fulfill our statutory requirement of 125 percent debt service coverage (current outstanding bonds of \$28 million plus the \$27 million necessary for the current projects). The ordinance will be presented May 3 for a final reading.

We have been proactive and farsighted in protecting the Wabash River by upgrading our wastewater utility infrastructure. In 1997, we received the U.S.

Environmental Protection Agency's national second place award for our "aggressive and innovative program to control CSOs." We are strengthening our ongoing commitment to our community and the environment with these upgrades to the facility.

What's next?

The city's next newsletter, scheduled to hit mailboxes this summer, will highlight all the exciting changes underway on Sagamore Parkway.

Don't forget! You can always check the city's Web site at www.city.west-lafayette.in.us for the latest information.

CITY OF WEST LAFAYETTE

Phone: 765 - 775 - 5100

Fax: 765 - 775 - 5248

www.city.west-lafayette.in.us

Jan H. Mills, Mayor

Judy Rhodes, Clerk - Treasurer

Patti O'Callaghan, Council President

West Lafayette City Hall

609 West Navajo Street

West Lafayette, Indiana 47906

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